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ABSTRACT

The present invention provides an image processing apparatus and method destined for processing image data sent via a communication system. In the apparatus and method, image data corresponding to designation data supplied from the user are coupled to each other for grouping, features of the image data corresponding to the designation data, and the image data once coupled together as in the above are uncoupled according to the features of the grouped image data, to thereby accurately localize an area the user is interested in. Also, according to the present invention, a time interval between the designation data is computed, and the image data are coupled to each other when the computed time interval is less than a predetermined threshold, while they are not coupled to each other when the computed time interval exceeds the predetermined threshold, thereby detecting when the user's interest shifts to another image area. With this detection of the shift of the user's interest, it is possible to accurately localize an area the user is interested in.